

An
Inaugural Thesis
on the
Nature and Treatment
of that
State of Disorder
generally called
Dropsy.

by
John P. Whilldin

224 The front - Landmark
admitted March 20th 1820.

It is
a few of
treatments
sorely
members
and who
writings
Of these
pay age
place in
They
the eye
some
pay for
disorder
thoracic
They
guilt
absorb
in her

It is my design, in the following pages, to submit a few general observations on the pathology, and treatment of those preternatural accumulations of, serous or watery fluid, which occur in the cellular membrane, and circumscribed cavities of the body and which have been comprehended by Nosological writers under the general appellation of *Dropsy*.

These may occur in persons of both sexes, and every age, though they are said most frequently to take place in women and persons advanced in life.

They seldom appear as a primary affection of the system, but are generally a consequence of some previous disease, either general or local, and very frequently accompany obstructions, and other disordered conditions of some one or more of the thoracic, or abdominal viscera.

They have been said to depend on a loss of equilibrium of action between the exhalent, and absorbent vessels. Physiologists suppose that in health, the former of these, secrete, and pour

into even
seems to
is prece
the latt
be consi
to each
the exha
produce
force o
nition
But
halent
rished
the nee
accum
The
is pro
contro
the po
dang

into even
seems to
is prece
the latt
be consi
to each
the exha
produce
force o
nition
But
halent
rished
the nee
accum
The
is pro
contro
the po
dang

into every interstice of the body, a fluid which answers certain purposes in the animal economy, and is prevented from accumulating, by the action of the latter.

These two systems of vessels may be considered as antagonists, and so accommodated to each other that, when in health the action of the exhalents is increased, a corresponding change is produced in that of the absorbents, and when the force of the latter is diminished, a similar variation occurs in that of the former.

But, when from any cause the action of the exhalents is increased, or that of the absorbents diminished, without the corresponding change in both the necessary equilibrium is destroyed, and the fluid accumulates.

The manner in which this destruction of balance is produced, has always been a subject of great controversy among medical writers. "A debility of the solids," "a laxity of the exhalents," "a redundancy of watery particles, or deficiency of gluten,

a red g
 a sized
 retroge
 hypots
 but h
 sal an

arians to
frequen
minist
in debt
conside
design
of

these c
who b
intemp
of s
ced,
deper

or red globules in the blood; "a plethora of the vessels" "a rigidity of the exhalents;" a palsy, debility, rupture, or retrograde action of the lymphatics; with many other hypotheses, have been advanced to account for it, but have all been abandoned as altogether conjectural and unsatisfactory.

By Doctor Cullen and most European physicians these accumulations of fluid were supposed most frequently to depend on, or to be accompanied with diminished arterial excitement, and always originating in debility.

This imaginary state of debility was considered a specific condition of the system, and was designated by the name of Hydropic diathesis.

This hypothesis was founded on the fact, that these collections of fluid most frequently occur in persons who have been invigorated by previous disease, or habits of intemperance, or who have lived on a scanty or poor diet.

Of late, precisely an opposite opinion has been advanced, and it has been as strenuously insisted that they depend, on a state of congestion and excessive

action of the
side of the
this opini
grounds;
Firstly, the
appear imm
system, w
for exten
they reme
plainly
Secondly, B
these states
thirdly, G
a confir
removal
Fourthly,
or near
referred t
must occ

4.
action of the bloodvessels and a phlogistic diathesis of the system.

This opinion has been supported on the following grounds;

Firstly. Accumulations of fluid in the body, frequently appear immediately after those diseased conditions of the system, which are evidently accompanied with excessive arterial excitement, particularly where evacuating remedies have been entirely neglected, or but sparingly employed.

Secondly. They sometimes alternate or are connected with these states of disease.

Thirdly. This opinion of their nature was supposed to be confirmed, by the remedies employed for their removal, acting as evacuants.

Fourthly. As a congested state of a gland was deemed necessary to its increased secretory action, it was inferred that a similar state of the bloodvessels must occur in the cases under consideration.

But in all their speculations on this sub-

just Pat
as mere
and eat
by by t
ices of
succeedin
attempts
prove a
are esse
paukeri
viseue

our great
state c
pledges
measur
give all
three to
you, wh
of the

ject pathologists have considered the exhalents, as mere passive continuations of the large arteries and controlled in their operations solely and entirely by them. Viewing them in this light our ideas of their diseased condition must necessarily be exceedingly limited and imperfect, and all our attempts to explain its phenomena, will not only prove abortive, but by adding to the difficulties, which are essentially connected with it, will increase our perplexity, and, if possible, render the obscurity more obscure.

The human body may be compared to our great republic in which the individual states composing it, enjoy their own peculiar privileges, and have their separate interests, in some measure independently, but at the same time derive all their strength, ^{from} and almost owe their existence to their connection and mutual dependence, for, while all the subordinate parts or subsystems of the body perform their peculiar functions, they

not intended to be a mere
a mere paper continuation of the
and contained in their character
by them. However there is the
of their character must be
thoroughly limited and confined
itself to a certain number of
some extent that of course the
an essentially limited and it
themselves and if possible under the
the human body is composed
great vessels in which the
with comparing to every thing
large and have their extent
measure infinitely less than the
in all their strength and about
to their structure and matter
while all the important parts
of the body perform their functions

as for ever
then, but
the conduct
operations
This
exists in
in different
present in
can be per
ered.
of a paper
"we know
believe th
any partic
By thus
depend
ackn
ified b
pleas
order in

are so connected and do so mutually depend on each other, both in health and disease, that a change in the condition of one can scarcely occur, without the operations of the rest being modified by it.

This connection has been called Sympathy and exists in different modes and with different degrees of force in different parts of the body, and though it is less apparent in some than in others, no division of the body can be said to be entirely out of the sphere of its influence.

Now admitting the exhalents to the rank of a separate system and allowing them to perform their own proper and independent office, we may readily believe that their operations are not entirely controlled by any particular grade of arterial excitement.

By thus raising these vessels from their degraded state of dependence to their proper level, we will not hesitate to acknowledge, that their action may be as easily modified by a disordered state of the Stomach Liver Spleen, Brain Lungs or any other part of the body under every possible variety of arterial excitement as

that the condition of any one of these may influence that of another, without the necessary interference of the blood vessels.

The late Doctor Rush taught that the power of the exhalent and absorbent vessels is materially affected by too much or too little action in the arterial system.

That both these states of arterial excitement do frequently accompany an improper action of the exhaling and absorbing vessels is certain, that they often modify it, or that they may sometimes cause it cannot be denied, but that they produce or keep it up in every case is extremely problematical.

Though he only asserts that the power of these two systems of vessels is modified by the two opposite states of arterial action above mentioned, yet from the division of the diseased state under consideration which he has adopted, viz. into Tonic and Atonic, he appears to consider it as depending on them.

If in every instance one or the other of these two states of action of the arteries occurred we might hesitate in

doubting the correctness of this opinion, but we can assert without the fear of contradiction, that this is not the fact.

Many attempts have been made to divide these accumulations into distinct genera, according to their seat, or the supposed state of the circulating fluids. The division in most general use is that founded on the seat of the collection, but as each of these varieties may occur from different causes & all from the same common causes and as all require nearly the same general treatment this arrangement is of little practical utility, though it may assist us in our prognosis, the danger depending *Ceteris paribus*, on the importance of the part to which it is attached.

A preternatural collection of fluid may occur in one part of the body without affecting any other or it may pervade the whole system at once.

There are few symptoms attending it that can be regarded as essentially connected with or universally

attendant on it; perhaps the only invariable one is the swelling, which when it occurs externally is visible and presents an appearance easily recognised, and when internally, produces more or less derangement in the functions of organs in its neighbourhood. Most frequently it first makes its appearance in the lower extremities, producing in the commencement a soft inelastic swelling of the feet and ankles which becomes pitted by pressure with the finger and very slowly returns to its former shape after the pressure is removed. The swelling is generally most evident after the patient has remained some time erect, particularly if he use no exercise, and subsides partially when he is in a recumbent posture.

Continuing to increase the swelling advances gradually to the thighs and the scrotum and penis sometimes become enormously distended. While it remains confined to the extremities, and is connected with no derangement of any of the viscera it produces no very great inconvenience, but in the majority of in-

others.
 the cells
 pots, and
 certain
 of wing
 cell has
 of at
 the line
 which
 has on
 tell a
 giving
 lines,
 their m
 different
 attend
 quarter
 as gre
 posture
 and a

stances, it extends to the abdomen, occupying not only the cellular membrane of its parietes, but also its cavity, and interfering with the functions of the viscera contained in it. The patient now complains of a sense of weight in the part, and his respiration becomes difficult particularly when he is in a recumbent posture.

If at this time the abdomen be gently struck with the fingers an evident fluctuation may be perceived which serves to characterise the swelling, except perhaps when the fluid is contained in distinct sacs.

Still advancing the fluid next invades the thorax occupying the pericardium, or one or both sacs of the pleura, and now symptoms the most distressing in their nature appear. The patient breathes with great difficulty, is troubled with an almost incessant cough attended sometimes with a sense of suffocation, his countenance is pallid, bloated, and dyspnoic, his spirits are greatly depressed, he cannot rest in a recumbent posture, his sleep is short, interrupted, unrefreshing, and attended with unpleasant dreams. Every violent

excitation of body or agitation of mind produces the most distressing palpitation of the heart.

If the accumulated fluid is confined entirely to the cavity of the thorax, this affection may be confounded with some of the disordered states of the viscera particularly of the heart and larger arteries.

It has been said it may sometimes be distinguished by an evident enlargement and change of form in one or both sides of the thorax, but though this may sometimes occur, it is not very common.

Some have supposed that by striking the sternum with the fingers the fluid would be set in motion and its fluctuation might be heard.

Pressure on the abdomen has also been employed as a mode of distinguishing this from other diseased conditions of the thorax. This by forcing the abdominal viscera upwards diminishes the capacity of the thorax and thus interferes with the operations of the viscera contained within it, but it as effectually does this in any of the derangements of the thoracic viscera as when a fluid is collected in that cavity. In fact, I believe there is no one diagnostic symptom that can be said

to be per
be it d
compar
gritly
may the
tan pla
pore oth
searctic
The p
elected
tians w
implies
the case
the a
men in
er in c
rolls t
on the
in my

to be perfectly conclusive and satisfactory.

In all cases where this accumulation occurs whatever may be its situation, if any other disorder of the system accompany it the symptoms of both are for the most part greatly aggravated, and a state of things is produced very difficult of management. Indeed it seldom does take place unattended with evidence of a disordered state of some other parts of the body besides those employed in the secretion and absorption of the fluid.

The stomach and alimentary canal may be variously afflicted. Sometimes they continue to perform their functions with integrity, but generally they are more or less implicated, and frequently we have reason to suspect the cause of all the mischief to originate in them.

The Liver seldom remains free of disease, and perhaps never in persons who have produced the disorder by excess in eating or drinking. This viscus is indeed generally the first to fail under the heavy burden imposed on the system by intemperance.

As might be anticipated, the arterial system which has

been very
system, a
usually w
more or
frequently
the fluid
signal lo
estable.
mentioned
dence fro
of the act
uity over
The de
A border
set.
inquant
tion of i
or much
all a de
tense co

been very appropriately styled the dial plate of the general system, and which sympathizes so promptly and universally with all other parts of the body, generally deviates more or less from its healthy course, and is said, most frequently to become small, frequent, and hard, and when the fluid occupies the thorax and intermissions, or occasional long interval between the pulsations, is often perceptible. But though the state of pulse which I have mentioned most frequently prevails, we have ample evidence from the records of cases in which the condition of the arteries has been noticed, that every possible variety occurs in its volume, frequency, and force.

The kidneys so frequently participate in this state of disorder as even to have been suspected as its primary seat.

The urine is generally greatly diminished in quantity, and there is often so striking an alteration of its qualities as to have rendered it the subject of much curious investigation. Dr. John Black-
all a distinguished English physician has examined these changes with great industry and care, and

particularly the property which it sometimes acquires of coagulating by the application of heat or the addition of nitric acid to it. He asserts as the result of his numerous experiments, that this property is possessed by the urine in cases attended with an increase of arterial excitement; that urine scant in quantity, high coloured, depositing a red sediment, and not coagulable by heat or nitric acid, is indicative of a diseased, disordered, or congested state of some of the viscera, and that in cases attended with a feeble condition of the blood vessels, the urine is pale, diminished in quantity, is not coagulable by heat or nitric acid, and does not deposit any sediment.

Though this statement if correct furnishes us with some curious facts on the subject, it is not probable that physicians will ever relinquish the pulse in ascertaining the state of arterial excitement, or the various alterations of the different secretions in acquiring a knowledge of the condition of the viscera, for these uncertain changes in the quantity and properties of the urine. In fact, the urine sometimes continues entirely unaltered, but if even in every instance

some change should occur, or specific alterations should even be produced in particular cases in its properties, they would then afford but little aid in practice, except as collateral evidence of the state of the system.

The skin very frequently becomes altered in its condition being generally hot, dry and void of perspiration.

Treatment.

To enumerate the various articles employed for the cure of this disordered condition of the system, would make it necessary for me to notice almost every article of the Materia Medica, for there are few remedies that have not at some time been used for its removal, and of whose efficacy there is not some evidence on record.

Physicians generally considering the removal of the accumulated fluid as the chief and most urgent indication, direct all their inquiries and researches to the discovery of articles calculated to accomplish this purpose, and no sooner do they find one to produce the effect in a few instances, than they publish and set forth its virtues in the most glaring colours, and the fancied

The history of the world is a long and
 interesting one, and it is one which
 has attracted the attention of all
 ages. It is a story of the human
 race, of its struggles, its triumphs,
 its failures, and its progress. It is
 a story of the great empires, of the
 great wars, of the great discoveries,
 and of the great men who have
 shaped the world. It is a story of
 the human mind, of its power, of
 its limitations, and of its potential.
 It is a story of the human heart,
 of its joys, its sorrows, its hopes,
 and its dreams. It is a story of
 the human spirit, of its strength,
 of its weakness, and of its glory.
 It is a story of the human race,
 of its past, of its present, and of
 its future. It is a story of the
 world, of all that is in it, and of
 all that is to come.

principles of
 the human
 mind
 the human
 heart
 the human
 spirit
 the human
 race
 the world
 the future
 the past
 the present
 the human
 mind
 the human
 heart
 the human
 spirit
 the human
 race
 the world
 the future
 the past
 the present

specific is indiscriminately employed in every case.

Thus, as might be anticipated, having, from its injudicious administration often failed of effecting the promised cure, or sometimes even produced positively injurious effects, is not only stripped of its ill acquired name but is denied the merit to which it may perhaps be really entitled, and is succeeded by some other remedy equally extolled, which must inevitably soon share the fate of its predecessor.

But when we consider the immense variety of circumstances under which the proper balance of action between the exhalent and absorbent systems may occur, we will not be surprised to find that a mode of treatment which will at one time prove entirely efficacious, will at another time not only fail of success, but even produce effects decidedly injurious, for, here as in all other cases "conscient practice consists in the administration of proper medicines in their proper places".

Though there are unquestionably great difficulties essentially connected with the state of disease of which we are treating, I don't not,

The pages here removed, con-
tained sundry observations on the subject of
Necrology, which the Med. Faculty
deemed to be improper, & not to be
sanctioned by them - With this improp-
riety, Mr. Whilldin was required, on
the 24th inst. to eradicate the parts dis-
approved of - which was accordingly
done - by himself, in presence of the
Faculty. -

removed, con-
 subject of
 Faculty
 not to be
 the this improp-
 required, on
 the parts dis-
 was according
 come of the

indeed, I feel confident, that the want of success in attempts at its removal is in very many instances attributable to the absurd practice of addressing our remedies to one particular symptom without the slightest reference to the immense variety of circumstances under which it may occur. Thus the legitimate offspring of Nosology is an evil greatly to be deplored not only for the mischief it has done in the practice of regular physicians but for the dreadful ravages it will yet commit in the broad foundation it has laid for the greatest mischief.

Among the many evidences of its absurdity Doct^r Sydenham has recorded one instance in his "Treatise of the Dropsy". Having succeeded in effecting a cure in one instance (the first which he had to treat) on a particular plan of treatment, he says, he thought he had become master of an infallible remedy, and boldly and confidently administered it in the next case that came under his care, but having persevered in it for some time his patient gradually grew worse, became dissatisfied, and dismissed him. He further adds

of my men
distance of
wondered
his father
into a pos-
ions inter-
and parge
Gotten Rich
had such
let out on
of his phi-
"When th
he wanted
is truly co
where the
is the stor
of the
known
before u
what I

"if my memory does not fail me, the recovered by the assistance of another physician who administered more powerful remedies". And such will be the mor-

tifying fate of every practitioner who addresses his remedies to a name given to a variable combination of symptoms instead of watching attentively their many changes and varying his treatment accordingly. The late

Doctor Rush very well compared a physician who pursued such a course to the Bermudian sailors ^{who} when he set out on a voyage threw out shingles from both sides of his ship to serve him as guides on his return.

When the "Monstrous" nosology reigned unopposed it was to be expected that such practices should prevail, but it is truly astonishing that it should still have existence when the first medical precept we are taught is "Attend to the state of the system and prescribe accordingly."

If the force of error is so strong as to prevent us from acknowledging and embracing truth when it is placed before us in its strongest light, how transcendently great must be the power of that genius which can bring

it forth from the depth of obscurity in which it is sometimes buried, and divesting himself of the prejudices of early education, will firmly stand as its advocate regardless of the weight of opposition he must meet.

I cannot here withhold my humble tribute of gratitude and praise to that great benefactor of mankind, whose gigantic powers shattered the fetters of Zoological tyranny and who while he warmly advocated the national Liberty of his country, achieved her Independence in Medicine. Impelled by an ardent love for truth, and encouraged by the hope that it would finally prevail against the most powerful opposition Doctor Rush not only discovered and embraced it but stood almost alone in its defence, and so far from being discouraged by the opprobrious epithets which were so abundantly showered on him, viewed them as incentives to increased efforts, and became stronger by resistance.

But though he has done much though he has routed the enemy, and made his final extermination inevitable, the conquest is not yet complete and we still find that even in the very quarter in which

truth w-
get entire
it's illusion

the liberty
jest of m
rest of
the body
tion of p
is maint
and page
Hence
without
medies i
falside
seldom
though
of Hipp
all on

truth was first sighted the Magic Ball of error, not
yet entirely broken, and physicians too frequently follow
its illusions.

7 Blood-letting.

Of the particular remedies the first I shall take
the liberty to speak of is venesection. This has been a sub-
ject of no small controversy among physicians, their diffi-
rent opinions respecting the pathology of this variation of
the body's ^{from} healthy state, having led them to the adop-
tion of very opposite modes of treatment. On one side it
is maintained that it originates in or depends on "debility"
and requires an invigorating plan of treatment.

Hence arises a most pernicious practice of administering
without distinction or reserve, cordial and stimulating re-
medies in every case, while most evacuating measures are
forbidden, particularly venesection, which is considered as
seldom admissible and always hazardous, and which
though it has been occasionally employed from the time
of Hippocrates to the present day, has been generally look-
ed on as a deviation from established rules of practice.

~~Handwritten text, crossed out with large X's.~~

July 1861

Handwritten text, mostly illegible due to fading and bleed-through from the reverse side. The text appears to be a letter or a journal entry, discussing various topics in a formal or semi-formal tone.

So m
morthern
two me
the do
ing from
rather t
St. Bon
the offi
H. Thoro
never
stret
fades, c
these de
boy, a
is often
gates
H. Blo
fatty o
the by
that d

So much indeed is its use deemed by many as an innovation, that they employ the lancet, with all the caution necessary in a most dangerous experiment, and when they do venture upon its use, they do it, with a view of relieving some distressing or immediately dangerous symptom rather than as a part of a curative plan.

Dr. Donald Monro in his Essay on the Dropsy says "if the obstruction is sudden, and the patient strong and plethoric, Bleeding must not be omitted; for daily experience teaches us, that in this manner alone vessels obstructed by fulness or by too great contractility of their sides, can be safely, speedily, and agreeably freed from these disorders" Again - "Where the blood is thick and siccous, and its momentum too great in the vessels, which is often the case with young people the cooling antiphlogistic method must be pursued, and the patient must be bled, although the symptoms of the Dropsy manifestly appear"

But so little was he guided by correct principles in the employment of the lancet, that having two patients at the same time under similar

✓ The first patient.

• The same day on which the first bleeding was directed for the former patient.

circumstances
under the
onset of
menstruation
feet, and
out any
bleeding
the first
and on
blooded
against
the to deli
the girl
two rather
first of a
row of
hairs
in both
the first
on this

circumstances, after the one had gradually grown worse under the use of other remedies he directed her to lose six ounces of blood to relieve a great difficulty of breathing under which she laboured. This had the desired effect, and the medicines which she had before taken without any benefit, now operated well and after a second bleeding she recovered. And of the other he says "I at first ordered him the same medicines as Mary Woods and on the 25th. was intending to have had him bled as well as her; but from the prejudice there is against bleeding in dropical cases, I thought it was better to delay it till I saw what effect it should have on the girl. I returned next day to the hospital to see these two patients; but the boy was dead." Though in the first of these cases blood-letting was denoted only with a view of relieving a distressing symptom it performed a principal part in the cure. I may here observe that in both these instances the pulse was small and quick. He finds even Dr. Blackhall the most approved modern writer on this subject betraying the same distrust of the remedy.

While a
the lancet
for the dis-
of the body
of ability
useful, and
and thus
renewed.

the which
 is prevent
 on can
 circumsta
 though we
 A Medis
 a fluid b

Thus restricted to the age or previous habits of the patient, the duration of his disease, or a few particular symptoms that may sometimes attend the application of the remedy is exceedingly limited, and we are left to combat the disorder in its most inveterate forms with less powerful weapons.

While I thus advocate the judicious employment of the lancet, I would not go the length of those who suppose the disorder to depend on a "Phlogistic Diathesis" (a state of the body equally indefinite and unintelligible with that of "Debility") and insist that blood letting is generally necessary, and some depletory measures always indispensable and thus by shunning one evil fall into another equally pernicious. Of the nature of the diseased operations in the system which produce this phenomenon, or how remedies act in preventing or removing it we are equally ignorant. Nor can I take on myself to say what are the precise circumstances under which blood letting is proper or necessary, though we have abundant evidence that it is frequently the remedy; Indeed I can see nothing in the circumstance of a fluid being diffused through the cellular membrane, or of

ated in the
reclude -
these cases
is regarded
ing full
actual exp
is frequent

97
recoiled
bulge
L

the many
which I
E

caused the
fluid.
thicker the
ice when
tion of the

lected in too great quantity in a cavity of the body, to preclude the use of the lancet. The pulse, which in these cases is seldom noticed and even by some totally disregarded frequently calls imperiously for the lancet, being full, hard and frequent; and I am persuaded from actual experiment that the small, chafed pulse which so frequently attends does not of itself forbid its use.

Having already transgressed the limits I had prescribed for the present purpose, I shall only beg indulgence while I briefly notice a few other remedies.

To do the subject justice and assign to each of the many remedies ~~their~~^{its} proper place is a task for which I confess myself wholly incompetent.

Emetics are said in some instances to have caused the very rapid removal of the accumulated fluid. When the stomach is greatly involved in the disorder they may be necessary and from the influence which the state of the stomach has over the action of the absorbents they may produce very salutary

effects of
 in the
 some re-
 must be
 we must
 when the
 life to the
 be embel-
 and the
 greatest
 beam
 which I
 of the fo-
 latter en-
 for the
 inter-
 or thine
 ever of i
 highest

effects even where that viscus remains undisturbed.

The very frequent propriety of Purges in these cases is universally acknowledged, though some practitioners prefer the more lenient and others the most drastic.

In our choice of purges, however, we must be regulated by the circumstances of the case. Where there is torpor of the bowels, and insusceptibility to the operation of mild purges, drastic ones are to be employed.

The cathartics in most common use and the one which will be perhaps applicable in the greatest number of instances is a combination of Cream of Tartar and Salap.

The manner in which I have seen it administered is - one drachm of the former with a scruple or half a drachm of the latter every day or two according to circumstances.

Dr. Chapman recommends one drachm of Cream of Tartar with ten or fifteen grains of Salap given twice or thrice a day, as he to keep up a constant catharsis; and of its efficacy thus exhibited he speaks in the highest tone of confidence.

of the
G...
on
the one
to give
a law
or, however
Disit
the article
greatly a
to know
his my
to worth
of its effe
instances
appropriate
for and
bit of of
accepted.
a mirror
state of

of the numerous articles comprised under the head of
 Stimulents all have been occasionally employed.

The one most confided in at present is the Squirrell.

This given in doses of two or three grains three or four times
 a day either alone, or in combination with Calomel or Ictra
 or sometimes with both will often prove very serviceable.

Digitalis which once held so exalted a rank among
 the articles of the *Materia Medica* was at one time
 greatly depended on by physicians in the cases before us.

To know how to estimate the value of this article I con=
 fess myself perfectly at a loss. To form an estimate of
 its worth from the slender experience which I have had
 of its effects would indeed be rash though in the few
 instances in which I have seen it employed it has dis=
 appointed my hopes. There is very high authority

for and against this article, and there is great divi=
 sity of opinion respecting the cases to which it is best
 adapted.

Dr. Withering one of its first and greatest
 admirers recommended it in cases attended with a weak
 state of arterial excitement, while some other physi-

cians think it better suited to cases of an opposite character.

Judging from its common effect we should be led to adopt the latter opinion. Dr. Chapman, however, thinks it adapted exclusively to those cases in which Dr. Withering recommended it, and this opinion he supports from his own success in a great many instances.

Other narcotics besides digitalis have been used, and among these Tobacco has acquired some reputation.

Opium has sometimes been very serviceable.

Among the great number of remedies that have been serviceable we might enumerate, Rest, Exercise, gentle or laborious, Fasting, Low diet, Generous living, Abstinence from, or the very liberal use of Drink, Hot or Cold, either dry or combined with moisture, Most of the Mineral and vegetable Tonics, with many others. In the choice of these the discriminating judgment of the physician must be exercised.

Of the passions of the mind, Fear is the only one which has produced any very decided advantage.

The local remedies that have been here employed are,

184 June
long of the
an only p
pictures
the troubles
where there
tending to
I. 184. 6
carried for
The best m
I. 184. 7
impregnate
nially ex
occupies the
Arises from
before the p
rather very
184. 8
ficial.
their hav

1st. Punctures. These are often serviceable when the swelling of the body and limbs is very great, but their effects are only palliative and temporary. The employment of punctures and scarifications is objectionable on account of the troublesome ulceration which sometimes follows it, especially where there is not great caution used in preventing their extending too deep.

2nd. Trauma. This is effected by means of bandages carried firmly round the limbs and body of the patient.

The best material for this purpose is flannel.

3rd. Frictions either with the dry hand or with flannel impregnated with some stimulating substance have been occasionally employed very advantageously. When the fluid occupies the extremities great advantage may sometimes be derived from rubbing the limbs upwards in the morning before the patient rises from bed, and applying a flannel roller very firmly.

4th. Blisters have in some instances proved highly beneficial. Their employment is objected to on account of their having sometimes produced gangrene and mortification.

action of the
effect is
the phen
linguist
only. Wh
are partly
tion of the
Gapping
from the
first in the
in new me.

To the pe
many men
the list is
certainty.
the catalog
place of the
show which
let efficiency

ection of the parts to which they were applied, but this effect is not to be apprehended except in cases where the skin is greatly distended and the circulation very languid in it.

5th. When the fluid occupies the abdominal or Thoracic cavity and the symptoms become very urgent the operation of Paracentesis is sometimes resorted to.

Tapping the abdomen is an easy and safe operation, but from the difficulty of ascertaining the precise seat of the fluid in the Thorax, the operation for relieving that cavity is now nearly if not entirely abandoned.

To the remedies already enumerated might be added many more if it were requisite. I regret indeed that the list is so extensive as it only tends to prove their uncertainty. But I look forward to the day in which the catalogue will be greatly abridged, when in the place of the many uncertain remedies, we shall possess a few which judiciously administered will be of life saving efficacy.





